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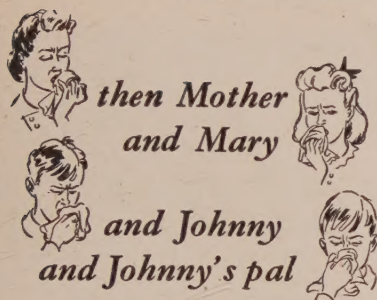
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**Frank Leighton
and
Angela Baddeley**

who give splendid performances in *Chicken Every Sunday*, Firth Shephard's new production at the Savoy Theatre, which is reviewed on another page. This picture, incidentally, is one of the first taken by stage photographer Houston Rogers since his recent safe return to England, after four years spent in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

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Theatre World

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Vol. XLI
No. 247

Editorial and Advertising Offices:
1, DORSET BUILDINGS,
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4 (Central 1555)

Subscription
13/6 per year
post free

Edited by Frances Stephens

August, 1945

DOROTHY Sayers, who knows her theatre, said in the course of a memorable speech at the Malvern Conference of Churchmen, in 1941:—

"There is more real community of feeling and interest between, say, a Russian actor and an English actor than between an English actor and an English stockbroker; and if you shut up two hundred total strangers together in a cellar, I swear that before an hour had passed the stage people present would have sorted themselves out and formed a circle of their own."

Miss Sayers went on to say that, alas, the same community of spirit does not necessarily exist among those calling themselves Christians, but be that as it may, we can take pride in the ancient and world-wide traditions of the theatre and in the acting fraternity who may now have the opportunity of playing a big part in cementing the friendships of the nations.

These thoughts were brought to mind by two events of the past few weeks. One, the news that C.E.M.A. is to continue its splendid work in peace-time as the Arts Council, and Lord Keynes' admirable broadcast left no doubt as to the high purpose behind the movement. The other was the completion of ten years' work by the British Council, who in their efforts to further friendship for Britain in other countries, have not been slow to recognise the ambassadorial potency of the theatre. With Viscount Esher as its chairman, and Mr. Bronson Albery, Mr. Ivor Brown, Mr. Lewis Casson, Mr. Frank Cellier and Mr. Stephen Thomas as other members of the Council's Drama Department, activities in the sphere of the theatre began in 1937, when, at the request of H.M. Government, the Council arranged at the Paris Exhibition a Fortnight of British Ballet and Drama.

Over the Footlights

At the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, the Council sponsored two tours: the Dublin Gate Theatre went to the Balkans, where it enjoyed great success; and the Old Vic Company made a tour of the Mediterranean. At this time, too, John Gielgud and his Company played *Hamlet* in the courtyard of Krönberg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark. Mr. Gielgud was hailed by the Danish press as the world's greatest *Hamlet*, and short though the season was, there were many striking manifestations of Anglo-Danish friendship.

The next venture was the tour of the Sadler's Wells Ballet in Holland just before the German invasion. The Company played everywhere to packed houses, until the invasion ended the tour so abruptly.

During the war, the Council has done its utmost to keep up contacts between the British theatre and theatres of other countries. Scripts of modern British plays have been sent abroad for translation, publication or performance, in response to many requests.

Activities since the liberation of Europe are fresh in the memory; the visit of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to the Continent, and the exchange between the Comédie Française and The Old Vic Companies, have been outstanding successes.

This is a great story, and with the return of more normal conditions The British Council hopes greatly to extend its work of making the British theatre appreciated overseas and in assisting other countries to keep Britain informed about their drama. In this last respect, may we hope for organised exchanges with the theatres of our great Allies of the war years, America and Russia?
F.S.

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New Shows of the Month

"Chicken Every Sunday"—Savoy, June 20th.

"Sweet Yesterday"—Adelphi, June 21st.

"Duet for Two Hands"—Lyric, June 26th.

"No Room at the Inn"—Embassy, July 10th.

"Chicken Every Sunday"

IT is interesting to speculate why the craziness of *Arsenic and Old Lace* should have a wider appeal than the craziness of this American comedy by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein (based on the book by Rosemary Taylor). Not that the audience was slow to laugh long and loud, but one felt instinctively that the humour was exclusively American and Arizona at that. This is a case undoubtedly where an imported American company would have persuaded us to accept without question a stray Red Indian and a deranged female or two.

Angela Baddeley, who contrives to breathe life into every part she tackles, brings warm humanity to Emily Blachman, the shrewd wife who runs a boarding house and a motley crowd of boarders at considerable profit and so prevents her impracticable husband (Frank Leighton) from bringing ruin to the family with his crazy business schemes. In a long cast, good performances come from Alison Leggatt as the pathetic Miss Sally; Peggy Evans as Rosemary Blachman; Marten Tiffen as Jeffrey Lawson; Rowena Ronald as Rita Kirby and Cameron Hall as George Kirby. W. G. Fay contributes a bit of real Irish as Jake, and Charles Rolfe as Clem the carrier man, has a welcome human touch. The play is produced by Austin Melford.

"Sweet Yesterday"

AN entirely new British musical is something of an event, and this charming romance should have its attractions for London audiences. The music by Kenneth Leslie-Smith, though not outstanding, has a lilt of its own, and the stars, Webster Booth and Anne Ziegler, are given many opportunities for demonstrating their vocal talents.

The story is centred round Calais and Paris in 1805, at a time when the sparkling capital of France was very gay indeed, and England's secret agents abounded. It is hard to believe, however, that the whole fate of Trafalgar rested on the doings of Sir John Manders (Reginald Tate). Nevertheless, the story of Sir John's rescue of Louise Varenne's lover, Captain Edouard Labouchere, is romantic enough.

The settings and costumes by Clifford Pember and Alec Shanks are exceedingly

colourful, and there is the added attraction of a ballet arranged by Frank Staff and Cleo Nordi.

Hugh Miller, Doris Hare and Mark Daly are others in the cast who give excellent performances.

"Duet for Two Hands"

MARY Hayley Bell's new play is cunningly contrived to hold the attention throughout, and proves once again that one need not accept as gospel all the happenings of a drama to enjoy oneself to the full. *Duet for Two Hands* is a real bit of theatre with lively, pertinent dialogue, and the author has achieved a fine sense of atmosphere by setting her play in the Orkneys, in 1904.

The cast of five miss no dramatic opportunity in presenting this gripping story of a famous surgeon who gives a poet, following a mountaineering accident, the hands of a man hanged for murder. Elwyn Brook-Jones as Edward Sarclet, the sinister surgeon, contributes a brilliant portrayal of a diseased and perverted mind, and by contrast the poet of John Mills is a strong and wholesome character. Mr. Mills conveys with skill the sensations of a man with a new pair of hands—hands which have a strange influence over him in the Eighteenth Century castle in the Orkneys, whither the surgeon genius has taken him for his own perverted motives. Another apt contrast is provided by Mary Morris as Abigail Sarclet, the surgeon's daughter, who is as untamed as the gulls circling outside, and Elspeth March as Herda Sarclet, the surgeon's sister, whose calm sanity is like a sheet anchor. Merle Tottenham completes the inmates of this strange household with her matter-of-fact Fletty, the maid-servant.

The play is produced by Anthony Pélissier and John Mills, and the last scene at any rate, with its near-Grand Guignol touch, is authentic Pélissier colourfulness.

"No Room at the Inn"

IT is well to be reminded of the terrible price our children have had to pay in this war and to realise that in the years immediately ahead we as a nation will have problems to face not unrelated to the problem of German youth. *No Room at the Inn* demonstrates with poignancy the scars that must have been left on thousands of children who were torn away from home and good influences.

Joan Temple's skill has been to present her case so effectively that propaganda does not obtrude. Nor does one get the

"Sweeter and Lower"

*My ample bosom heaves
with pride,
Though troubles may
beset.
Britannia rules the
ocean wide,
And there's life in the
Old Girl yet!*

Henry Kendall as Britannia, in "Exception to the Rule, Britannia," the riotously funny new finale to the first part of *Sweeter and Lower*, J. W. Pemberton's revue at the Ambassadors Theatre.

With him in the group, left to right, are: George Carden, Edna Wood, Christopher Hewett, Richard Curnock, Gretchen Franklin and Ilena Sylva.

Written by Alan Melville, with music by Charles Zwar, the new finale was introduced to celebrate the second anniversary of this record breaking revue.



sense that the play is about an out-of-date evil; there have been too many recent cases of neglected and ill-treated children to warrant smug complacency and the assumption that all is well now the bombs have stopped falling.

The dominating figure in the play is the immoral, greedy slut of a woman—the sort habitually to be found in loud check shirts and bright shiny satin blouses—in whose frowsty house five children are billeted and neglected physically and morally. No praise could be too high for Freda Jackson's powerful portrayal of this depraved creature and her scene of maudlin drunkenness is a masterpiece of vivid realism.

Of the children who are the victims of this woman and the muddling inefficiency of the billeting officer, three are on the way to being Dead End kids, but Ronnie the "blitz orphan" and Mary the sensitive and well brought-up little girl, whose fate is sealed by the death of her mother, are the ones against whom the crime is the greatest. We are made to feel the horror of hopelessness through a child's eyes, and for children despair is despair indeed. Mary's love and protection of Ronnie against the squalid background of torn, red wallpaper and beer bottles is pathetic yet noble. The tragic climax of the story, in which the woman is brought to a violent end, is vividly revealed in Dickensian colours in prologue and last scenes.

The author shows a strong sense of characterisation and a real understanding of a child's mind. Mary Kimber, as Mary, gives a sensitive, restrained performance, while Joan Dowling, the irrepressible young "blondie" who was tough enough to

stand up to her fate as an evacuee, offers a wonderful display of high spirits and shamelessness. Others who give good performances are Tony Quinn, as the billeting officer, and Ursula Howells and Ruth Dunning as the kindly young women who try to save the children in the face of local indifference.

The play is produced by Anthony Hawtrey, and no detail is lacking in presenting the sordidness of the background of one of the strongest plays we have seen in recent years.

F.S.

Items

Reviews of *The Cure for Love* (Westminster, July 12th), and *The First Gentleman* (New, July 13th), will appear in our next issue.

* * *

After a fortnight's holiday, and an open-air week at Finsbury Park, the Sadler's Wells Ballet returned to the Sadler's Wells Theatre, on July 24th, for an eight-weeks' season. The last performance of ballet at the Wells took place on Friday, September 6th, 1940, the evening before the first big daylight raid on London.

* * *

The Hasty Heart, with Margaretta Scott, will open at the Aldwych during the last week in August.

* * *

Phyllis Dixey's *Peek-A-Boo Again!*, which opened at the Whitehall Theatre on July 16th, is very likely the last non-stop revue she will present. It is understood that her future revues will be of "regulation" intimate type.

* * *

The first West End theatre to revive that time-honoured institution, the staff outing, is the Cambridge. On the third Sunday in September, "back and front" will get together for an all-day trip up the Thames, in a specially-chartered launch.

* * *

The next Green Room "Rag" is expected to be at the Saville Theatre on a Sunday evening in October, Frank Lawton the Chief "Rag-picker."

Donald Wolfit Company

THE Donald Wolfit Company commence their autumn tour with a two-weeks' season at Wimbledon Theatre on August 13th, presenting *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other plays will be added later.



An interesting picture taken during Donald Wolfit's recent Middle East tour. Mr. Wolfit is seen with leading lady Rosalind Iden greeting Donald Layne-Smith (right), Shakespearean actor serving with the R.A.F. in the Middle East. Mr. Layne-Smith, who was with Wolfit's Shakespearean company before the war, took over the part of Dogberry at a few hours notice, during the Cairo season. He is now acting for E.N.S.A. in the Middle East.

Donald Wolfit's likeness to famed Egyptian actor Yousef Wahbi caused him

some embarrassment in Cairo during his recent Middle East tour. Passers-by would stare, nudge each other and whisper excitedly "Wahbi!" as he walked by! Fighting gallantly against illness which at one time laid six members of the cast low, the Company gave over thirty performances, including a Command Performance for King Farouk. Wolfit celebrated Shakespeare's birthday in the Garrick tradition by preceding a special performance of *Twelfth Night* with a prologue written and recited by himself. After the performance a N.A.A.F.I. birthday cake was auctioned by Donald Wolfit, who sold it to King Farouk for £270.

The Company sailed on a troopship packed with men going to India. Instead of resting on the voyage, as planned, Wolfit supplied much-needed entertainment by giving the troops free shows of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* (in khaki shirt-sleeves). The plays were vociferously received by the men who crammed every available inch of space on board. When Wolfit disembarked he was greeted with "For he's a jolly good fellow" and every member of the Company was given a printed card expressing the appreciation of all ranks for the "hard work and unselfishness" which enabled them to see a "series of Shakespearean plays superbly acted."

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Christabel: You're a real catch now. You'll require to watch your step. There's a lot of riff-raff about. You're at an awkward age, too.

RICHARD BIRD as Professor Dauntly and SOPHIE STEWART as Christabel.

“*Lady from Edinburgh*” AT THE PLAYHOUSE

THIS delightful comedy, which is presented by Linnit and Dunfee, Limited, and Claude Soman, has all the charm and wit which one would expect from the author of *Jeannie*, of happy memory. This time, Aimée Stuart has been joined by L. Arthur Rose as co-author, and the result is as light and amusing a domestic comedy as is to be found in Town at the moment. Charles Hickman, who designed the setting, also directs the play.

The story tells of impoverished and widowed Aunt Christabel, who descends on her sister's flat in Mayfair and proceeds with Scots thoroughness and charm to put the family's affairs in order. Christabel's brother-in-law is on the way to becoming financially embarrassed himself and is only too delighted when a stranger in the shape of Professor Dauntly, who has recently acquired a fortune, descends on the household with the expressed purpose of marrying Greta, his daughter. This brings about a breach between Greta and Ian, her boy friend, which does not please Christabel at all. In the process of cleaning up the situation, the little lady from Edinburgh makes

herself indispensable to the Professor, who falls victim to her loquacity, domestic competence and domineering ways, with scarcely a struggle. Incidentally, Christabel takes charge in the flat when the elderly, incompetent maid is called-up for munitions, and immediately becomes an invaluable asset in the difficult domestic round.

Sophie Stewart as Aunt Christabel gives a finished and wholly delightful performance. There could not be any doubt that the wee Lady from Edinburgh would conquer all from the moment of Miss Stewart's arrival on the stage. Her Scots accent is irresistible, and her manner and appearance are charm personified. Richard Bird has a part after his own heart in the diffident, absent-minded Professor. Henry Hewitt as the harrassed head of the family strikes a note of real authenticity and humour. Enid Sass is the conventional housewife dabbling in some vague war-work to the life, and Dulcie Gray and Alan Haines as the young couple whose love affair goes temporarily awry, play with sympathy and understanding. Also, not quickly forgotten is Ethel Coleridge's dour-faced maid-servant.

PICTURES BY ALEXANDER BENDER



Ian : How soon can we get away?
Dulcie Gray as *Greta* and *Alan Haines* as *Ian*, in happy mood at the opening of the play.

Christabel : I was wedged in between two Tommies—rough stuff, but rare good fun. They sang all the way. I joined in. It was great.

Professor : A born traveller.

Mother (*Enid Sass*), is a bit overwhelmed by her unexpected visitors.



Christabel : What are Churchill and Stalin grinning at now? Like a couple of naughty schoolboys. Hold your paper still a wee minute, I can't see to read.

The family find Aunt Christabel's early morning good humour almost more than they can bear. (*Right*: *Henry Hewitt* as *Father*).



Christabel: Just look at the holes in your socks! Did you ever see the like?

Professor: A ministering angel, thou.

Christabel begins to take the *Professor* in hand.



Christabel: Have you taken leave of your senses, Greta? You'd
 now over a fine fellow like Ian for a creature like yon? Look
 at him!

When Greta announces her intention of marrying the
 professor, her aunt expresses disapproval in no
 uncertain terms.



Greta: I'm afraid I'm too fond of
 expensive things. I hate cheap clothes,
 cheap shoes and stockings and cheap
 everything. I feel I'd kick over the
 traces, I just couldn't stick it.

Greta gives Ian her reasons for
 breaking their engagement.



Christabel: Can you not bear
a wee dod of pain?

Professor: Call that a wee
dod? Ow!

Christabel, who has by now agreed to help her sister in the domestic crisis following the calling up of the maid, Wickham, takes complete charge of everyone, and continues to bully the Professor into more civilised ways.



Mother: What on earth are
you doing?

Christabel: He lost his hair
—and just look at his thatch!

An embarrassing moment
for Christabel and the
Professor.



Wickham: Good evening, sir!
I hope I'll give you satisfaction.

The Professor does not
take kindly to the idea of
Wickham as his house-
keeper in the new house,
he has acquired for him-
self and Gretz.

(Ethel Coleridge, as
Wickham).

Author: So you're off tonight, are you? I envy you. Wish I could kick my hind legs at my worries and responsibilities and set sail for the other side of the world.

The news that Ian is on embarkation leave gives Miretta a jolt, and she struggles to see him again before he goes.



Miretta: You've got nothing and I only want you!

Miretta realises at the last minute it is Ian she loves. Aunt Christabel has played a big part in bringing her niece to her senses and is naturally delighted at the success of her efforts. As for the Professor, he has become utterly dependent on the lady from Edinburgh. Though the happy ending is a foregone conclusion.



Author: Oh, but everybody knows what love is.

The closing moments of the play, Father and Mother are reconciled to the loss of the Professor's lucrative son-in-law, especially as he will still be "in the family." Stated on the floor are Betty Dean as Rene and Geraldine Dod as Dulcie. This part is now played by Ena King).





"Lady from Edinburgh"

Left:

RICHARD BIRD

who has returned to the stage after an absence of four years to play the part of Professor Daunt. During the interim Mr. Bird has produced some outstanding play successes. Among others, he has directed Esther McCracken's *Quiet Weekend* and *No Medals*, and *Brighton Rock*.

Below: **HENRY HEWITT and ENID SASS** give delightful performances as Father and Mother, whose conventional home is turned upside down by the visit of Aunt Christabel.

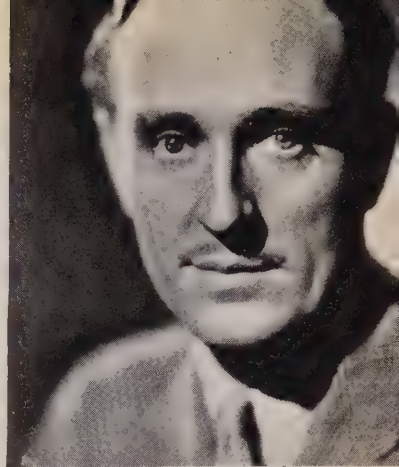


DULCIE GRAY

who gives another sensitive performance as Greta, will be remembered for her clever acting in *Brighton Rock*.

Self-Consciousness versus Self-Confidence

by
**ERIC
JOHNS**



Right:
**PETER
GRAVES**

A LEADING actor's first entrance is an important moment in any play, both for himself and for the audience. Peter Graves, as the millionaire Prince Orlofsky, makes a veritably royal entrance in the spectacular second act of *Gay Rosalinda* at the Palace.

The be-jewelled leaders of Vienna's 1872 Society chatter to the melting strains of Strauss waltzes beneath the glittering crystal chandeliers of the Orlofsky Palace. Silence falls on the fashionable gathering when the booming voice of a flunkey announces the illustrious name of their host—His Royal Highness Prince Franz Leopold Josef Carl Neppermuch Wenceslas Orlofsky. At that moment Peter Graves, as princely gay as our own Charles II, appears on the terrace and descends the staircase with superb ease and self-assurance, smiling to guests on the right and guests on the left, holding a monocle and long cigarette holder elegantly poised between the royal fingers.

It is such a wonderfully built-up entrance that this popular young actor becomes the cynosure of every eye in the house and on the stage. He is the undisputed centre of attraction—the royal pivot about which the entire act revolves. In view of this star entrance a leading question leapt to my mind in Peter Graves' dressing room: "Are you ever self-conscious on the stage?" To which he replied: "It all depends on the producer!"

"Self-consciousness can be one of the most difficult battles an actor has to fight, especially at rehearsal. Before the character has taken clear shape in your mind you often find yourself rather 'at sea' in the centre of an empty stage acting to a solitary producer sitting somewhere in the murky darkness of the stalls. Mentally, you put yourself completely in his hands, so if he chooses to be difficult or antagonistic you can never be anything but ill-at-ease in his presence. On the other hand, if you feel a bond of sympathy existing between you and the producer you will have no difficulty in 'letting yourself go' and doing your best work for him.

"Nothing is more disconcerting than being made to feel self-conscious by the producer during rehearsal while you are in that unsettled state of trying to remember lines and characterising your part.

"Apart from being a man of the theatre, the producer should be something of a psychologist. He is there to help. His job is to build, not to destroy. He can soon assess the intrinsic value of his artists; he knows their strength and their weakness and can treat them in such a way that they become inspired under his direction and

encouragement. Such is the ideal relationship between artist and producer.

"For me, rehearsing is a more dreaded ordeal than any first night. It is far more difficult to be assured and to concentrate in the presence of one's colleagues on a desolate stage than to give a finished performance on a first night when one is helped by a carefully studied role, make-up, costume, lighting, and that electric feeling that surges across the footlights from a house all keyed-up and eager to enjoy itself.

"Intensive concentration seems to be the only cure for self-consciousness. If you concentrate sufficiently on characterisation you are no longer self-conscious, for you are no longer able to consider yourself. How could a sculptor be self-conscious while deftly moulding his mass of clay to cause a masterly head to emerge out of chaos? He is lost to the world at such a time. It is the same with an actor who is sufficiently interested in his job to make an author's character leap to life and become a flesh-and-blood entity quite different from his own off-stage self.

"Self-consciousness must not be confused with 'nerves.' At rehearsal you are apt to suffer from self-consciousness, but not from 'nerves.' On the first night and during the run of the play you may occasionally suffer from 'nerves,' but not from self-consciousness, if the producer has done his job properly and made you feel completely at ease and at your best in the part. Self-consciousness is an actor's deadly enemy, bringing no benefit in its wake for anyone. But 'nerves,' despite their unpleasant effects, can benefit an artist. They keep him vividly alive; he is 'on his toes,' all eager to take the impossible in his stride; but self-consciousness can only make him feel rather foolish on the stage, causing him to lose his grip on his part, which inevitably falls to pieces at his feet.

(Continued on page 26)



Top: The colourful opening scene, "Fiesta," with singer Jill Manners (whose lovely voice in some charming numbers throughout the show is well worth hearing), as the Masked Lady. Centre: Vic Oliver, life and soul of the party, as Emperor Nero, in "Roman Holiday." Mr. Oliver's violin is much in evidence, both humorously, as here, to the tune of "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," and more seriously in other items. His piano rendering of *Ave Maria* in the second half of the programme is a high spot of the show. The other picture on this page gives a glimpse of the charming ladies of the chorus, in one of the many spirited numbers.

Scenes from

"The Night and the Music" AT THE COL



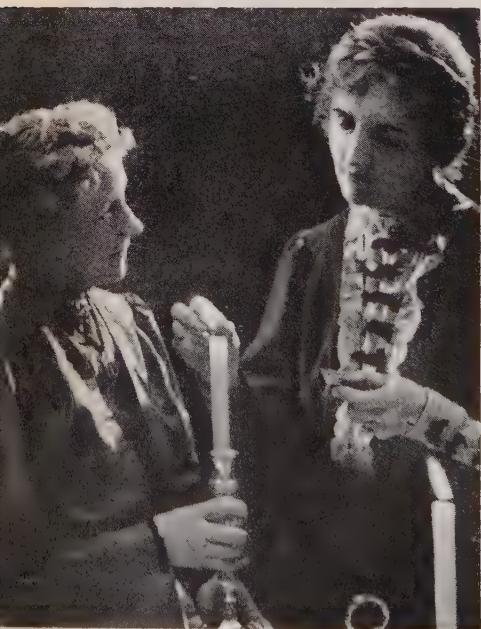
Top : A brilliant scene from "An Indian Fantasy," finale of the first part. *Centre* : The charming 1740 scene from "Bird's Eye View," A Masque of London Town. Dancer Beryl Kaye is seen as A London Sparrow against the background of Wren's London, and the other two episodes of the Masque depict London of the 1940 Blitz and the brave new London of the future. The bottom picture is a glimpse of the Ballet in the finale of the show, an entrancing display in three-four time entitled "The Great Waltz."

● These action pictures from Emile Littler's mammoth musical, at the Coliseum, give some idea of the scope and brilliance of a show which has talent, glamour, speed and an astonishing lavishness of production. Robert Nesbitt has staged and devised the show, assisted by Joan Davis, and the settings designed by Alec Shanks and costumes by Slade Lucas are a noteworthy feature. Van Phillips and his Orchestra provide the music for what is undoubtedly tip-top West End entertainment.



In the News

Left: A delightful study of WEBSTER BOOTH and ANNE ZIEGLER, who are co-starring in Lee Ephraim's romantic new musical *Sweet Yesterday*, at the Adelphi Theatre. With book by Philip Leaver, music by Kenneth Leslie-Smith and lyrics by James Dyrenforth and Max Kester, *Sweet Yesterday*, which is produced by Jack Hulbert, is both charming and melodious. Supporting Webster Booth and Anne Ziegler in this story of Napoleonic France, are Reginald Tate as a romantic English secret agent, Hugh Miller as sinister French Chief of Police, Doris Hare as the notorious Sans-Gene and Mark Daly.



John Vickers

Alexander Bender

Above: MARY JERROLD and LILIAN BRAITHWAITE in the incredible *Arsenic and Old Lace*, which passed its one-thousandth performance on May 14th. This comedy has already been seen by three million people in this country, and London audiences have included His Majesty the King, Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the Royal Family, Mr. Anthony Eden (two visits) and Field Marshal Montgomery. Right: ROBERT HARRIS and ELIZABETH ALLAN in that other Firth Shepherd success, *To-morrow the World*, now nearly one year old, at the Aldwych, will tour the provinces with this topical play for fifteen weeks, commencing August 27th.



Jacobowsky, always resourceful and cheery, keeps up the morale of French shelterers during an air raid on Paris, with marrons glaces. (L. to R.: Ann Hefferman as the Old Lady from Arras, Derek Barnard as the Soldier Husband, Ann Trego as his Young Wife and Karel Stepanek as S.L. Jacobowsky).



“Jacobowsky and the Colonel”

Pictures
by
John
Vickers

- Scenes from S. N. Behrman's adaptation of the Franz Werfel comedy, which for the lack of another available theatre was obliged to finish its run at the Piccadilly on July 28th. However, this story of the 1940 fall of France and the adventures of an enterprising little Jew and humourless mediaeval-minded Polish officer (played excellently by Karel Stepanek and Michael Redgrave), is worth recording. In the picture above, the Polish Colonel explains the military situation leading to the downfall of France to the Tragic Gentleman (Esme Percy). Right: Diana Gould as Cosette.



Jacobowsky, resourceful and experienced refugee that he is, buys the only car in Paris, in which to escape, but he cannot drive. After some trouble he persuades the cavalry-minded Colonel to drive the car, which he pompously agrees to do, providing they first drive through the German lines in search of his lady love. In the picture, the Colonel decides to invoke the personal attention of St. Christopher before embarking on their adventurous journey, by which he hopes to get secret Polish papers to England. (L. to R.: Danny Green as the chauffeur, Joseph Almas as Szabuniewicz, the Colonel's faithful batman, John Deering as Solly and Ina De La Haye as Madame Bouffier).



COSTUMES BY NATHAN

Left: With Marianne (Rachel Kempson) safely on board after many adventures, the party sets out for the port of escape.



The amusing scene on the road, when the ill-assorted refugees, who cannot do without each other, nevertheless come to loggerheads. The Colonel is jealous of Marianne's friendship with the little Jew and challenges Jacobowsky to a duel, at which psychological moment the Gestapo appear.



Above :

The scene in Papa Clairon's waterside Cafe, at St. Jean de Luz, when the Germans and Gestapo raid it. Already many of the refugees have crowded here from Paris, including the Tragic Gentleman, and already 'Vichyites' begin to make their appearance. Here comes Jacobowsky (who had been parted from his companions on the road), at the risk of his life, to find the Colonel and give him the fateful papers left behind in Marianne's hat. Later, Marianne and the Colonel arrive, but the Gestapo have been too clever for them. *Left :* The Gestapo man (Frith Banbury), sure of his prey (as he thinks), indulges in a little music, while the others watch apprehensively.

Right :

The exciting scene when, surrounded by the Germans and the Gestapo and in deadly peril, the Polish Colonel, no match in wits for the clever little Jacobowsky, proves himself a man of action and takes charge. Holding the Gestapo man before him, and bidding the others to take cover behind, he defeats the attempts of the German soldier to shoot. The party are now free to make for Hendaye and the rescuing launch from England.





The closing scene of the play. The Commander of the rescuing British Corvette (Michael Gough) waits impatiently whilst Jacobowsky and the Colonel have yet another argument, this time as to who is to be rescued. Finally, the Commander takes both of them, leaving Marianne, the boy Robert (Maurice Nicholas) and the Colonel's batman on the soil of France. As the batman plays the "Marseillaise" on his mouth organ the Corvette disappears from view.

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(Right):

William Gaxton, Shirley Booth and Victor Moore, in a scene from *Hollywood Pinafore*, which, according to our New York critic, is none other than the immortal *H.M.S. Pinafore* reconditioned and presented "With the deepest apologies to W. S. Gilbert."

Picture by Vandamm Studio.

BY OUR
AMERICAN
CORRESPONDENT

E.
MAWBY
GREEN



Echoes from Broadway

EVERY few years it seems someone gets the urge to start tinkering with Gilbert and Sullivan. The last time it was Mike Todd who turned on the heat and gave us Bill Robinson in a sizzling all Negro smash—*The Hot Mikado*. These past few weeks we have seen *H.M.S. Pinafore* reconditioned to suit the requirements of two different managements: Max Gordon, in association with Meyer Davis, gave us William Gaxton and Victor Moore in *Hollywood Pinafore* (or the Lad Who Loved a Salary), book and lyrics revised by George S. Kaufman "with the deepest apologies to W. S. Gilbert" and music still by Sir Arthur Sullivan; while John Wildberg entered Bill Robinson in the all Negro *Memphis Bound*, lyrics and music by Don Walker and Clay Warnick, and book by Albert Barker and Sally Benson "with gratitude to W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan." Neither of these productions quite came off. Although each had its moments, they only served to make you wonder how much better it might have been had all this energy and expense gone into one master production of the original and more seaworthy *Pinafore*.

In *Hollywood Pinafore*, Victor Moore, in another of his wonderful characterisations, wanders wistfully around as the slow witted Joseph W. Porter, head dope and dictator of Pinafore Pictures, accompanied by William Gaxton as Dick Live-Eye, a leading agent who talks his way into 10 per cent. of everybody's salary including the dumb Joe Porter's. Brenda Blossom (Annarnary Dickey), the Porter-made star, is the object of her boss's affection, but her heart is given beneath her station to Ralph Rackstraw, a lowly writer. It is Louhedda Hopsons (Shirley Booth), a caricature of two famous Hollywood columnists, who straightens out the rank of the writer when she discovers it was through a blunder in her column that she named Porter as the studio head instead of Rackstraw. It is she who sings so devastatingly of her profession "I'm Called Little Butter-Up." This is the lyric where you feel Mr. Kaufman is holding his own with Mr. Gilbert, but it comes early in the show and nothing that follows approaches it.

Much of Mr. Kaufman's satire would seem to be lost on the average theatregoer,

(Continued on page 26)



Ballets Jooss received an enthusiastic welcome back to London when they opened their six weeks' season, on July 10th, with a programme much enriched by their new orchestra. Above: A scene from Hans Zullig's new ballet *Le Bosquet*. The setting is Eighteenth Century France, reminiscent of Watteau, and in the picture the Company is seen leaving the "fête gallante."

ACTION PICTURES BY ROGER WOOD

"Ballets Jooss" AT THE WINTER GARDEN



Noelle de Mosa and Hans Zullig in *Le Bosquet*. Another new item of the present season is the revival of *The Seven Heroes*.



Hans Zullig as the Profiteer and Kurt Jooss as Death in *The Green Table*, brilliant Jooss ballet, whose poignancy has not lessened with the years.

Ballets Jooss in London

by AUDREY WILLIAMSON

THE Ballets Jooss opened a six weeks' season at the Winter Garden Theatre, on July 10th, with a generous and substantial programme. Performing *The Seven Heroes*, *The Big City*, *A Ball in Old Vienna* and *The Green Table*, they were able to present an important cross-section of their work, and the addition of an excellent orchestra, conducted by Richard Austin with the musicianly care and delicacy of detail that characterise his work, gave a new feeling of "body" to the ballets. *The Green Table*, in particular, gained in impressiveness through the orchestration of F. A. Cohen's highly theatrical score. A closely integrated orchestra of competent players, conducted both with musical taste and a sense of correlation with the movement on the stage, is enough of a rarity in ballet to-day for the Ballet Jooss to be congratulated on their acquisition.

The Seven Heroes was the only new addition to the repertoire; a revival of Kurt Jooss' pre-war comic ballet founded on a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. It is none of the best examples of Jooss' highly specialised technique, the accent on grotesque movement in this tale of valorous-intentioned peasants and their wives being particularly suited to the company's individual style. The choreography has genuine wit and invention, and the only flaw in an otherwise delightful ballet is in the choice of music, Purcell's English and courtly qualities being singularly ill-adapted in spirit to the gauche agility of European peasants. The ballet was danced with the precision than informs all this company's work, and as the small and timid youth who gains a dubious reputation for bear-slaying, Michael Charnley played and danced with great humour and charm. The scene with the children and their suspicious working-class mothers, a stylised composition of grave and touching humour, remains the highlight of *The Big City*, one of Jooss' most observant and poignant creations. Noelle de Mosa danced the Young Girl with her usual sensitivity and restraint and Rolf Alexander, although not effacing memories of Hans Zullig's incomparable and subtly suggestive study of the Young Workman, proved himself enough of an artist not to attempt to imitate his predecessor, but brought something of his own to the part, a quality less moving but of unassuming seriousness and intelligence. The performance of *The Green Table* once again demonstrated this ballet's undiminishable power, and finely performed by the dancers, headed by Kurt Jooss as Death, its universality, and at the same time its relevance to our own time, were driven home with tragic compulsion.

Owing to an early press date I am writing

prior to the London *première* of Hans Zullig's first ballet, *Le Bosquet*, on July 17th, but the performance I saw at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, early this year, showed it to be a work of charm and considerable choreographic promise. A delicate animated picture after Watteau, attractively designed by Doris Zinkeisen, with music by the Eighteenth Century composer and ballet master Rameau, the slightest of themes—a young girl's dream of her past lover and waking with an instinctive disillusion—is suggested rather than underlined, a valuable gift in a choreographer. Zullig shows throughout a painterly feeling in group composition and an ability to keep his patterns fluid in movement that is rare in a completely unpractised choreographer. The Jooss technique he uses with freshness and individuality, although strictly speaking this form of dance lacks the refinement necessary for the Court dances of the period, from which the classical ballet technique was already evolving in brilliancy and elegance. The Jooss dancers, with the notable exception of Zullig himself as the dream lover, also lack the stylishness of the Eighteenth Century French aristocracy, although their rounded grace and lively spontaneity have their own charm.

This ballet is less important in itself—it is an unpretentious work, as a first attempt at choreography should be—than as a promise for the future, not only in respect of Hans Zullig as a choreographer, but of the Jooss dance movement as a whole. Apart from Sigurd Leeder's *Sailor's Fancy*, which is too closely allied to *revue* to be of moment, it is the first ballet not by Jooss himself to be produced by this company, and it marks a new phase in the Jooss Ballet's development, the encouragement of choreographers from within the Ballet's own ranks. There is no doubt that some apparent lack of progression in the work of this company (for *The Green Table*, produced in 1932, is still its greatest work), derives from the fact that it has been forced to rely on the work of one choreographer; a circumstance which, however eclectic the artist's genius, is bound to restrict the development of a style in richness and variety. New mentalities are necessary in every art, and this Jooss himself fully realises.

Zullig's ballet shows the Jooss dance-style to be open to more than one method of approach, and his greater interest in classic technique may eventually bring an added complexity to the form, although at present, like Jooss himself, he plans his pictures on the flat and with little in the way of "lifts" or vertical construction. Whether younger influences will be strong enough to perpetuate this slightly limited technique after Jooss himself, the master mind, ceases to compose is fortunately a question which need not arise for many years to come.

Self-Consciousness versus Self-Confidence (Continued from page 15)

"I have found filming helpful in conquering self-consciousness, for to be a good film actor one has to be completely relaxed. The searching lens of the camera detects the least sign of tautness or uneasiness and magnifies it a thousandfold with disastrous results on the screen. Except in the first instance, I have never been self-conscious in the film studio, where I have always had the advantage of sympathetic direction. Furthermore there are so many demands upon one's attention that one's self is banished from the mind. Apart from script-lines and microphones, one has to note camera angles and those chalk lines on the floor which guide one's moves during the action of the sequence. A single false step, and the whole scene has to be shot again: so one rehearses over and over again and concentrates as never before, and every suggestion of self-consciousness is left behind.

"Filming is good for an actor's sense of values. In the film studio he will be faced with the undeniable fact that a girl without any previous experience can be engaged as his leading lady, and when the film is eventually screened she will give the impression of being a very fine actress, providing she has been wise and clever enough to follow quite blindly and unquestioningly every suggestion of the director.

"So often in films the stars, supported by a large number of experienced character players, are not actors in the true sense of the word. They are chosen for their looks, their sex or glamour appeal, which is etherialised by the director and his army of technicians until filmgoers gasp with wonder at the stupendous final result on the screen. In the theatre such easy-made stars would not scale such dazzling peaks in so short a space of time—if ever!

"As a general rule not much acting talent is required in films. The actor is only a small factor in that complex combination of art and science that produces a finished picture. So much depends on sympathetic direction, clever photography, imaginative lighting, expert cutting and editing that the actor becomes but a small contributor to the final result.

"Filming, from the actor's point of view is so different from the stage, helps the artist to know himself, and watching his own films gives him his finest chance of standing outside himself and observing his work dispassionately. A study of his screen work gives him an unrivalled opportunity to appreciate his assets and his shortcomings and helps him to cultivate a degree of self-confidence and self-assurance which should eliminate self-consciousness entirely from his professional life."

Echoes from Broadway

(Continued from page 23)

for many of the barbs can only be appreciated by those in the profession. For example, there is a hilarious take-off of a Hollywood story conference during which the writer is gagged and prevented from taking any part in the proceedings. They are out to make a prestige picture, one that will lose money, and someone suggests: "How about a remake of *Parnell*?" This gag hardly evokes a giggle, for few in the audience realise what a tremendous M.G.M. box-office fiasco this was.

As usual these nights the critical salvos went to the ballet. Viola Essen dances to Antony Tudor's *Success Story*, a trite tale of a small town girl who wins a Hollywood contract, bids farewell to her soda jerker boy friend, makes a movie, is handed the Academy award, but sadly dreams of the true happiness she might have had with her less glamorous boy friend. It has been suggested by one of the town's foremost dance critics that the enthusiastic reception accorded this ballet lies in the eager acceptance by the audience of movement in so static a show rather than in the merits of the dance itself.

The fate of *Memphis Bound* has already been decided, for this coloured version of *Pinafore* is no longer with us in spite of reviews that were considered more favourable than those of *Hollywood Pinafore*. The inadequate book told of the efforts of a group of Negroes to get a grounded showboat back on the river by putting on a production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. While we were listening to Gilbert and Sullivan being sung and swung by Bill Robinson, Avon Long, Ada Brown and the rest of the talented troupe, *Memphis Bound* was riding high and *Pinafore* never sounded better to us. But when Walker and Warnick interpolated their own songs and Barker and Benson tortuously told their story, everything lurched and the production capsized.

Jacques Deval, whose luck seems to have left him since he started writing in English for the American stage, has again met with disaster with *Oh, Brother!* which co-starred Hugh Herbert and Arleen Whelan. This comedy was concerned with a chess playing crook (Mr. Herbert) who gets an impoverished artist (Don Gibson) to pass himself off as the long lost son of a wealthy Florida family. The artist falls in love with his "sister" (Arleen Whelan) and most of the fun was intended to stem from this French farce situation. As told and acted in English, *Oh, Brother!* eluded all charm and risque appeal.

Hugh Herbert, who had not been seen on the local boards for almost eighteen years, woo-wooded his following with his funny

(Continued on page 32)



This interesting picture from Moscow was taken at a rehearsal of Lillian Hellman's play *The Watch on the Rhine*. Seated, from left to right, are Ivan Bersenev, Art Director of the Theatre of the Leninist Komсомol, Serafima Birman, director and actress, Lillian Hellman, Sofia Giatsintova, and members of the cast. (Photo by J. Khalip).

Two Actresses and an Actor

by Nikolai

THE STORY OF THREE LEADING MOSCOW STARS

Volkov

AMONG Moscow's stage stars of the older generation, Serafima Birman and Sofia Giatsintova, occupy a leading place. These two actresses have had an amazingly similar career, although as far as personalities go they are quite different.

They both studied under Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavsky. Giatsintova joined the company of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1910, Birman in 1911. And both left the theatre in 1924 when the former Second Moscow Art Theatre, which emerged from the Moscow Art Theatre's first studio was founded. In their youth the two actresses had the guidance of Konstantin Stanislavsky who at that time was conceiving his famous stage principles with a group of young actors at the first studio of the Moscow Art Theatre. On the Studio's small stage Birman and Birman created a series of splendid stage portraits, most remarkable among which are Birman's impersonation of the queen mother in Strindberg's drama *Just XIV* and Sofia Giatsintova's magnificently acted Maria, the maidservant, in *The Twelfth Night*.

Recent years have seen both actresses at the Moscow Theatre of the Leninist Komсомol, where they also direct plays.

Sofia Giatsintova's acting is marked by a gift for the lyric and the comic. Her performances to-day, as in her youth, are distinguished by her accurate portrayal of characters. She is one of those actresses who strike the happy medium between the outward portrayal of the character and the inner content, and she possesses in full measure that rare quality—a sense of proportion. Whether she impersonates Ibsen's Nora or Lope de Vega's widow of Valencia she will give a perfectly chiselled mould of the character, while strictly adhering to the author's style.

One of Giatsintova's triumphs this season was her production of Ivan Turgenev's comedy *A Month in the Country*, in which she plays the lead—that of Natalia Petrovna, the lady of a rich estate who falls in love with Belayev, a young student acting as a tutor to her little boy. Turgenev is a master of dialogue and his comedies remind one of old watercolours. In them deep feeling is expressed, not in tense dramatic form, but in a restrained manner. This particular quality of the writer's Giatsintova was quick to convey both in her acting and in the directing. Thus it was not in vain that Moscow critics pointed to Giatsintova's production of *A*

Month in the Country is a sample of an interpretation of a classic play.

Serafima Birman began this year's season with a splendid performance in Konstantin Simonov's new play *So Shall It Be* in which she impersonates Major Grech of the Medical Corps. Possessing a tall and angular figure and sharp features, it was easy for her successfully to introduce the grotesque in her style. She shows a national fondness for exaggerated gestures and emphatic movements at times bordering upon caricature. At the same time she never fails to have a profound psychological grasp of the part. In the character of the surgeon in Simonov's play Serafima Birman combines beautifully an exterior eccentricity with warm humanity. Thus she creates a charming portrait of a woman who faces bravely the emptiness of her private life, finding consolation in her work and in being a true friend to the people she loves.

Particularly vivid is Birman's portrayal of Fanny Farely, the elderly widow in Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine*, now showing in Moscow under the title of *The Farely Family Loses Its Peace of Mind*. In this play, which Birman herself directed, the actress shows an amazing insight into the spiritual world of a kind and respectable lady who has really never grown up. It is with a deeply appealing charm that Birman conveys the impulsive nature, the moodiness and naivete of her heroine, actually making the audience live with her the scenes of laughter, tears and compassion. As director of the play, Serafima Birman shows a powerful sense of living reality. Even the Farely home, where the action of the play is laid, emerges with all the impact of a living organism.

In their acting both Giatsintova and Birman have attained consummate skill. Like their teacher Konstantin Stanislavsky, they endeavour to steer clear of all hackneyed, artificial effects and are for ever seeking new mediums of expression. And it is this restiveness in their art that colours their performance with the vigour of youth and makes each of their roles a milepost in the endless search for artistic perfection.

Vassili Kachalov

ALL Russia's theatre lovers paid homage to Vassili Kachalov, the famous actor, on his seventieth birthday, February 12th, 1945.

Vassili Kachalov joined the company of the Moscow Art Theatre, directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky, when he was just turned twenty-five. Nature had endowed him with a stalwart figure, luxuriant blond hair and features of chiselled beauty. There was an irresistible charm in his voice with its soft velvety timbre.

However, the first part that Kachalov played in the Art Theatre was that of an



Vassili Kachalov at home with his Daschunds, who are inseparable companions on his rambles.
(Photo: Gornstein, cabled from Moscow).

old man, for he appeared before the Moscow public as the wise Tsar Berendei in *Snow Maiden*. A long grey beard and old man's make-up concealed the actor's youthful face, but he succeeded in bringing home to the audience the essential traits of the character he impersonated with a sense of poetry and spiritual purity. It was this that won him the heart of the exacting Moscow public.

Very soon Kachalov became one of the leading actors of the Moscow Art Theatre. As is commonly known both Stanislavsky and Nemirovich Danchenko strove for perfect team work in their productions. It was their ideal to have every actor of the cast, irrespective of the importance of his role, play with equal artistry. That, however, did not preclude the vividness of the individual performance. Thus Kachalov by the force of his talent as well as the charm of his magnetic personality gained more and more prominence on the stage, and in the course of his forty-five years' career at the Moscow Art Theatre, Kachalov has appeared in fifty different parts, in plays Russian and foreign, classic and modern.

Kachalov played in all five Chekhov plays produced in the Art Theatre. He played Trigorin in *The Seagull*; Astrov in *Uncle Vanya*; Ivanov in *Ivanov*; Tusenbach and Vershinin in *The Three Sisters*; the student Trofimov and later Gayev in *The Cherry Orchard*. Chekhov himself was pleased with Kachalov's interpretation of his characters. After Kachalov's performance of Tusenbach, Chekhov kept repeating: "You played the part beautifully, beautifully, I say."

It was to the deep lyric quality of the actor's gift that Chekhov's plays appealed most strongly. Very subtly Kachalov conveyed the author's innermost thoughts in his languid rhythm, provincial or country life and the aroma of more tender and amiable human relations.

One of Kachalov's most successful roles

(Continued on page facing)

was that of the baron who sinks to dregs in Maxim Gorki's well-known drama, *Lower Depths*. Here Kachalov displayed the characteristic irony of his comic roles with amazing ease in the vivid character portrayal.

In 1903 when the Art Theatre produced Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Kachalov appeared in the title role. From tip to toe he turned Roman. He incarnated Julius Caesar as the character was conceived by Shakespeare and at the same time adhered to the historic interpretation of the Roman Emperor. It also fell to Vassili Kachalov to play Hamlet in Gordon Craig's production of the play at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1911.

In *Hamlet* Kachalov is chiefly concerned with the weltschmerz theme. His Hamlet is the man who with all his being is aware of the contradictions of life and the imperfection and disharmony of the world.

Kachalov's ability to create portraits of men who are thinkers and men of action at the same time, has manifested itself with particular force in his impersonation of Ivan Karamazov in the Moscow Art Theatre's dramatisation of Dostoyevsky's *Karamazov*. The nightmare scene where Ivan speaks to the imaginary devil is a masterpiece of dramatic presentation.

Kachalov's most successful role in Soviet plays has been that of a Siberian partisan in Vsevolod Ivanov's *Armoured Train*. The actor creates a powerful portrait of the leader of the peasant uprising against interventionists in which realistic interpretation is combined with a romantic inspiration.

During his entire artistic career Kachalov has enjoyed the sincere love of the Soviet audiences. Apart from appearing in plays Kachalov gives individual recitals and invariably to packed houses. He recites poetry and fragments from plays over the radio and performs at workers' clubs and army hospitals.

The title of the People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. was conferred on Kachalov by the Soviet Government. The order of Lenin and of the Red Banner of Labour adorn his breast. For outstanding services in theatrical art he was awarded the Stalin prize.

Kachalov has traversed a long path, but the years have not made this master of Russian drama lose any of his youthful fervour. At present, at the age of seventy, he is rehearsing two important parts, Famusov in Alexander Griboyedov's immortal comedy *Wit Works Woe*, and Neschastlivtsev in Ostrovsky's *Forest*.

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AS WE GO PRESS

THE provinces have waited two years to see *Sweeter and Lower*, J. W. Pemberton's record breaking revue, but it is still playing to capacity at the Ambassadors Theatre, where it looks like running into 1946.

And so A. A. Dubens, who is associated with Mr. Pemberton in the London presentation, is sending Phyllis Monkman and George Lacy at the head of another company on an eighteen-weeks tour of the leading provincial cities, opening at the Lyceum, Edinburgh, on July 30th, and visiting Aberdeen, Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield, Northampton, Oxford, Bournemouth, Coventry, Hull, Blackpool, Derby, Liverpool, Manchester and Dudley.

John C. Wilson and H. M. Tennent's production of *Sigh No More*, the new revue devised and staged by Noel Coward, opens at the Piccadilly on August 22nd.

The last weeks are announced at the Haymarket Theatre of John Gielgud's season of *Hamlet*, *The Duchess of Malhi*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Circle*. *Hamlet* will be played at the final performance on August 4th. *Lady Windermere's Fan*, directed by Mr. Gielgud, with a cast including Isabel Jeans, Dorothy Hyson, Griffith Jones, Geoffrey Toone, and with Cecil Beaton's decor, follows at the theatre on August 21st. It is intended that this production will remain at the Haymarket while John Gielgud visits India with *Blithe Spirit* and *Hamlet*. Mr. Gielgud hopes to appear in a new play at the Haymarket when he returns shortly after Christmas.

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Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON



Diana Wynyard and Barbara Couper in a scene from *The Wind of Heaven*.

THE *Wind of Heaven* has an origin unique in the history of our theatre. Ever since Emlyn Williams started writing for the stage he has been fascinated by the subject of the Second Coming, and has wanted to use the theme as the basis of a play. However, the idea was shelved until he had perfected his technique by writing such memorable successes as *Night Must Fall*, *The Corn Is Green*, and *The Morning Star*.

Then, while in Palestine on an ENSA tour, possibly because Bethlehem reminded Williams of a typical Welsh village, he conceived a more or less definite plan for *The Wind of Heaven*, which ultimately took him longer to write than any of his previous plays. It is also the first play he has written outside this country, for he worked assiduously at the dialogue while playing to Allied troops in seven different countries—Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Italy, France, Belgium and Holland. Only the final revision was done at home.

Playgoers have wondered why the author set the story in the time of the Crimean War. Doubtless the idea is more credible when seen as a legend of the past, just as such works as *The Miracle* and *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* would lose much of their power and effectiveness if they were set in a modern frame.

Some playgoers derive more satisfaction from *The Wind of Heaven* by treating it as an allegory applied to our own time, but the author has laid down no hard and fast rules. It is up to the playgoer to judge for himself.

It is absurd to suggest that Emlyn Williams is attempting to convert the public at large to Christianity because he has written a play on a religious theme. One might just as well accuse him of preaching homicide because he wrote *Night Must Fall*, with a murderer as the central character. *The Wind of Heaven* is purely and simply a work of art; it is a study of humanity and should be judged as such, and must not be regarded as an instrument of religious propaganda.

On two recent Sundays the cast gave guest performances of the play to a mixed audience of appreciative Service men and women. They met with enormous success and started endless discussions in Messes and Rest Rooms, proving how right our leading actors are when they refuse to "play down" to the troops.

More recently Emlyn Williams has been re-writing his delightful play, *Spring 1600* (originally produced at the Shaftesbury in 1934) which should be one of the most exciting first nights of the Autumn season. Strolling Elizabethan players are responsible for much of the comedy in this colourful picture of one of the peak periods in our history. Since writing the original version in the days before *Night Must Fall*, the author's more experienced hand has completely re-written the long first act and considerably strengthened the rest of the play, so the new production can in no sense be regarded as a revival.

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A Military Theatre Unit says Farewell

ON Christmas Day of 1941 the London District Theatre Unit gave its first performance to a military audience. The play was *Without the Prince*, and the idea behind the Unit was to give the troops plays of a high standard, with as near as possible a West End production, using for the purpose a cast of fully trained soldiers and A.T.S. who had either professional experience or some training at a recognised dramatic school. The Unit was self-contained and mobile, prepared to play in tent, army hut or large Garrison theatre.

So successful was the venture that the War Office soon decided it should travel far and wide, at home and abroad. Twelve plays have been included during these war years, and at the end of June in London the Unit gave its farewell performance before disbandment. The final play was *Murder Without Crime*, and *Theatre World* was invited to the performance in Brompton Road. With a military audience, it was an opportunity to assess the Unit's work.

The stage was very small, the setting a little crowded for the actors' freedom of movement, but these details mattered little with a cast of four, two couples, who gave vivid, capable performances in a strong thriller. Sheila Heron and Judy Bacon played the two women's parts, but as the play is written around the two male characters, success demands exceptionally good playing from the men. It was forthcoming from C. E. Cameron Wilson as Matthew, and George Doonan as Stephen. The latter's performance of the young weakling husband contrasting well with the stronger character of his landlord friend. In fact, the play turns on Matthew, and Captain Cameron Wilson's acting in this part assuredly reached very high West End standards. It is a profound pleasure on the theatre anywhere to see and hear an actor who values, and can use, good dialogue. A pause here, an inflexion there, a glance or expression to fit the word; the sum of these qualities is the hallmark of acting that warms and satisfies the onlooker. With such technical means this actor built up his performance, letting Matthew's warped personality grow steadily to its emotional climax.

Remarks from this audience of troops and A.T.S. at the end fully endorse the claim of the Unit that in its several years' work it has found and fostered an eager new audience for the theatre. "That was good." "Fine." "Splendid evening": praise well earned by the players. Let us hope that demobilisation will not sever this audience's obvious appreciation of dramatic art. These new friends for the stage have been created at a vital moment, when our theatre will need all its supporters.

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Echoes from Broadway (Continued)

antics and had everybody deploring the misery of his material.

The Messrs. Shubert in association with Albert de Courville have presented *The Wind is Ninety* by Capt. Ralph Nelson. This fantasy has an army flier, who has been killed in action, return home with the Unknown Soldier of World War 1, to give comfort and courage to his wife and family at the time they receive the news of his death. The play has been extravagantly praised by some critics as "touching," "heartbreaking," "poignant," etc., and brusquely dismissed by others for its bucketsful of sentimentality.

Elsa Shelley, who last season had a moderate success with her play *Pick-Up Girl*, struck a snag with her latest effort *Foxhole in the Parlor*, which Harry Bloomfield presented briefly with the young and promising Montgomery Clift in the main rôle. Mr. Clift is the discharged veteran, a victim of battle fatigue, who cannot find peace to continue his career as a concert pianist until he has delivered a message urging an everlasting peace in atonement for his buddies who have died on the battlefield. "Give God a seat at the San Francisco conference table," is the political ticket that finally gets him to Frisco. All very earnest, very noble, but death at the box-office.

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